

(b) *Protection of Forests from injury.*(1) *General Protection and Breaches of Forest Law.*

43. The Forest Protective Staff during the year received no addition to its strength, although the want of a larger establishment is greatly felt. The pay offered on first appointment as well as future prospects, both in the upper and lower grades, are by no means good and therefore it is not surprising that the general character of the subordinate establishment is far from being satisfactory. In other Departments of Government, a better scale of pay is readily sanctioned, and it is to be regretted that the representations of the Forest Department for improving the tone of the subordinate service have not been viewed with similar indulgence.

Inadequacy of the Protective Staff.

44. The executive branch is being now recruited from the Forest class in the College of Science, Poona, but these trained officers, I am sorry to say, are following in the footsteps of the unscrupulous and ignorant men whom they are succeeding owing to their slender means. It is also found difficult to obtain recruits to fill vacancies in the ministerial staff as the pay is not considered sufficient for their maintenance in these days, when a common coolie can easily earn Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 per mensem.

45. Under such circumstances, the work of the Protective Staff leaves much to be desired, but it must be said that plundering of the forests on an extensive scale is certainly a thing of the past. A very large number of petty thefts, however, continue to be committed, which are confined mostly to material required for personal use or the use of some influential zemindar or land-holder living in the vicinity of the forests, whose servant or follower the thief is.

46. The number of new cases taken into Court in the two years under comparison were 48 and 34, respectively, and the decrease is attributed to the fact that only serious cases were sent for trial, the more trivial ones being either compounded under Section 67 of the Indian Forest Act or, when the assessed value of damage was considered insignificant or it was a first offence, the offenders were not proceeded against but let off with a warning.

Cases tried by Magistrates.

47. It appears that in Form No. 52 of the year 1893-94 cases of illicit grazing compromised by two of the Divisional Forest Officers (Hyderabad and Naushahro) were not included. The proceedings in such cases are regulated by the rules framed by the Commissioner in Sind, but the penalty enforced thereunder is under the authority of Section 67 of the Indian Forest Act, and therefore I have included them in Form No. 52 for 1894-95. Exclusive of illicit grazing cases, it will be seen that the number disposed of in this manner by Divisional Forest Officers is almost the same as last year, the figures being 172 and 171 for the two years.

Cases compounded under Section 67 of the Indian Forest Act.

48. A comparative statement of the number of cases tried before Magistrates for breaches of the Forest Law during the year under report and the year preceding, with the result of the trials, is given below:—

Details by Divisions of prosecuted cases.

Division,	1893-94.		1894-95.		PERCENTAGE OF FAILURE.	
	Prosecuted.	Acquitted.	Prosecuted.	Acquitted.	1893-94.	1894-95.
Sukkur	14	9	8	3	64	37
Naushahro	10	1	24	16	10	67
Hyderabad	13	2	10	1	15	10
Jerruck	2	2	4	1	100	25
Total	39	14	46	21	36	46

49. In addition to the 34 new cases taken into Court, there were 19 cases brought over from the preceding year. Of the total number, 46 were disposed of by the 30th June 1895, with the result that there were 25 convictions and 21 acquittals. The percentage of failures it is to be regretted is higher than in 1893-94, and is shown against the Naushahro Division. No explanation is traceable in the Divisional report, but I attribute it to the fact that prosecution witnesses as a rule will not adhere to the statements incriminating the accused, but retract directly they are examined before Magistrates.

50. In all the other divisions, there is a decrease in the number of prosecutions and the percentage of acquittals has also fallen, which show that prosecutions have been undertaken with care and judgment.

Details of cases compounded under Section 67 of the Forest Act.

51. The classification of the compounded cases is given in the following statement for the two years under comparison :—

Division.	ILLICIT GRAZING.		THEFT.		OTHER OFFENCES.		TOTAL.	
	1893-94.	1894-95.	1893-94.	1894-95.	1893-94.	1894-95.	1893-94.	1894-95.
Sukkur	606	741	23	52	...	...	629	793
Naushahro	110	66	60	31	...	...	170	97
Hyderabad	54	16	83	71	...	...	137	87
Jerruck	397	345	4	17	1	1	402	363
Total	1,167	1,168	170	171	1	1	1,338	1,340

52. Cattle breeders and other owners of cattle take out usually grazing permits for a less number of animals than they actually possess, and it is only when they are detected in grazing a larger number of animals than is covered by the permit that the penalty is levied. The number of such cases, therefore, must fluctuate as it depends on the amount of honesty and vigilance displayed by the subordinates. In the theft cases, the increase is in the Sukkur and Jerruck Divisions, in which during the previous year the offenders were let off with a mere caution, but as the forests began to show signs of serious damage more stringent measures had to be resorted to.

53. Exclusive of illicit grazing cases, the number compounded together with the sums of money accepted and received by Divisional Forest Officers by payment of money compensation under Section 67 of the Indian Forest Act compared with the figures of 1893-94 show as under :—

Division.	1893-94.		1894-95.	
	No. of cases.	Compensation.	No. of cases.	Compensation.
		Rs.		Rs.
Sukkur	23	44	52	96
Naushahro	60	153	31	72
Hyderabad	83	323	71	240
Jerruck	5	8	18	51
Total	171	528	172	459

54. The 172 cases of compounded offences exclusive of those coming under illicit grazing are classified according to the amount of the fine paid in the following statement. The average compensation per case is about Rs. 2-11-0 whereas in the preceding year it was Rs. 3-2-0 :—

Division.					No. of cases in which compensation was fixed at Rupees										Total.				
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		12	15	18	
Sukkur	...	...	...	...	33	8	4	1	3	...	...	...	...	2	...	1	...	52	
Naushahro	...	...	...	...	19	5	1	...	2	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	1	31	
Hyderabad	...	...	...	...	6	28	7	13	11	3	1	...	...	1	1	...	...	71	
Jerruck	...	...	...	...	7	4	1	...	5	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	18	
Total					...	65	45	13	14	21	3	1	3	...	4	1	1	1	172

55. The information given in the following statement is in accordance with paragraph 11 of Government Resolution No. 1899 of the 15th March 1891:—

Division.	No. of complaints disposed of under Section 67.	No. of cases in which compensation has been accepted.	No. of appeals against the proceedings.	Manner in which appeals have been disposed of.
Sukkur	788	788	...	...
Naushahro	97	97	...	...
Hyderabad	87	87	...	...
Jerruck	363	363	...	...
Total ...	1,335	1,335	...	...

(2) *Protection from Fire.*

56. The results of the year's fire protection as compared with those for the year 1893-94 are shown below:—

Division.	NO. OF FIRES.		AREA BURNT.	
	1893-94.	1894-95.	1893-94.	1894-95.
			Acres.	Acres.
Sukkur	79	44	3,727	2,884
Naushahro	3	6	109	192
Hyderabad	9	3	516	136
Jerruck	16	7	3,457	332
Total ...	107	60	7,809	3,544

57. Although there is a decrease in the number of fires as well as in the area traversed by them, this apparent improvement in fire conservancy cannot be altogether ascribed to greater vigilance on the part of Forest subordinates or to any special fire protection measures. The river rose very early and the inundation was an exceptionally high one. Many of the forests received a copious supply of water, which was followed by a luxuriant growth of grass. Under such favourable circumstances, it is not to the interests of the cattle breeders, who are the principal incendiaries to set the forests a-light.

58. In Upper Sind, however, the forests are occasionally burnt to manufacture dead wood when the supply gets scarce in the forests in the vicinity of large towns such as Rohri, Sukkur, Shikarpur, Larkana, &c., but when the origin of the fires is traced to this source, the forests are closed to people engaged in this trade.

SUKKUR DIVISION.—Since the present Divisional Forest Officer, Mr. Dalal, has been in charge he has devoted his special attention to fire conservancy, with the result that all the fires reported during the year were speedily extinguished before they had time to get out of hand.

NAUSHAHRO DIVISION.—The fires were not destructive and were due to accident.

HYDERABAD DIVISION.—In the forests of this division the growing stock is gradually surmounting and killing the undergrowth of reeds and grass, and it is only in new formations in which the tree-growth has not established itself that there is any risk from fires.